



Finding Ways to Provide a Lifeline to S.O.S.:

Student Knowledge and Behaviors Surrounding the Student Office of Sustainability

Student Researchers: Olivia Edwards, Brandon Hoege, Angela Knauf, Ella Koch, & Brianna Truitt

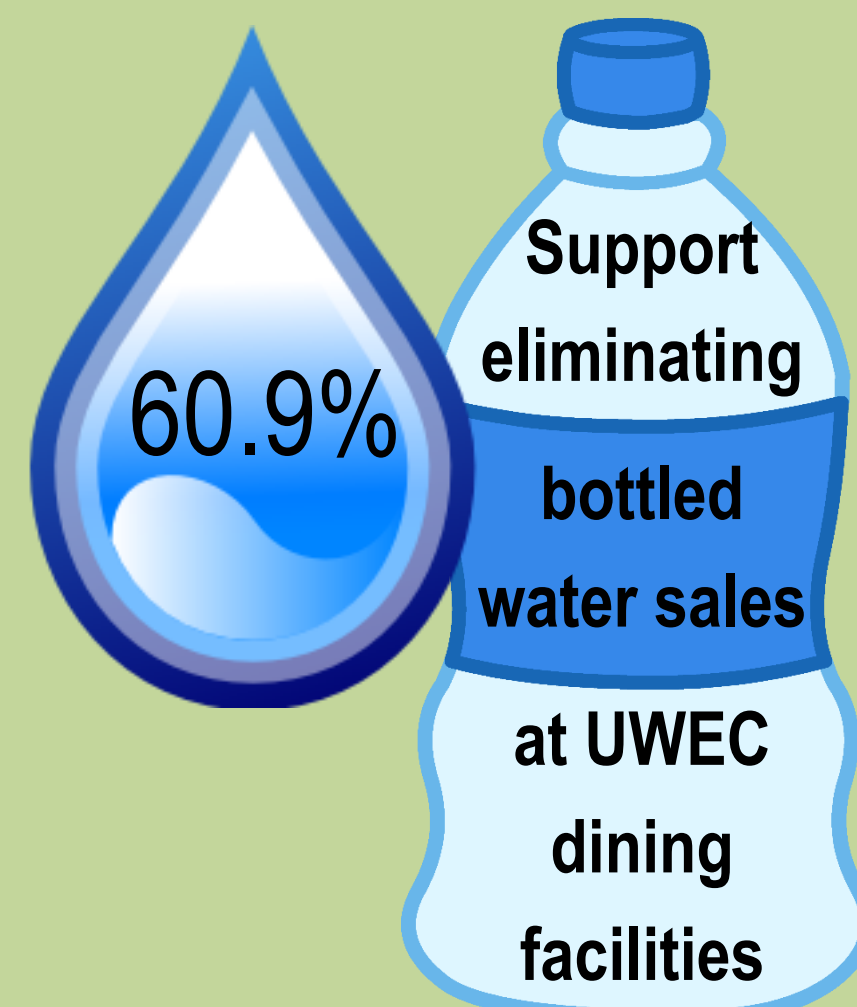
Faculty Mentors: Evan K. Perrault – Department of Communication & Journalism - Scott K. Clark – Department of Geology

Problem

With an annual operating budget of \$200,000, financed entirely by student segregated fees (\$20/student yearly), the Student Office of Sustainability has the potential to make significant strides in helping UW-Eau Claire to become a more sustainable campus. However, consistent turnover in the office's leadership ranks means it is difficult for initiatives to lead to any meaningful change. Message strategies and promotional efforts, while performed consistently over the years, may no longer be effective ways to reach students and enact change.

Questions Guiding This Research

- How great is students' knowledge about the Student Office of Sustainability?
 - Do they know it exists?
 - Do they know its annual operating budget and where the money comes from?
 - Do they know how their money is being spent?
 - How familiar are they with the many initiatives the SOS performs?
- What sustainable behaviors do students indicate they consistently perform?
- Have students ever seen messaging from the SOS?
 - In what ways would students like to be informed about SOS and its various activities in the future?



Do Students Know what SOS does with its money?

We provided students with a list of 11 activities that SOS performs Along with an option to indicate – "I've never heard of any of these"

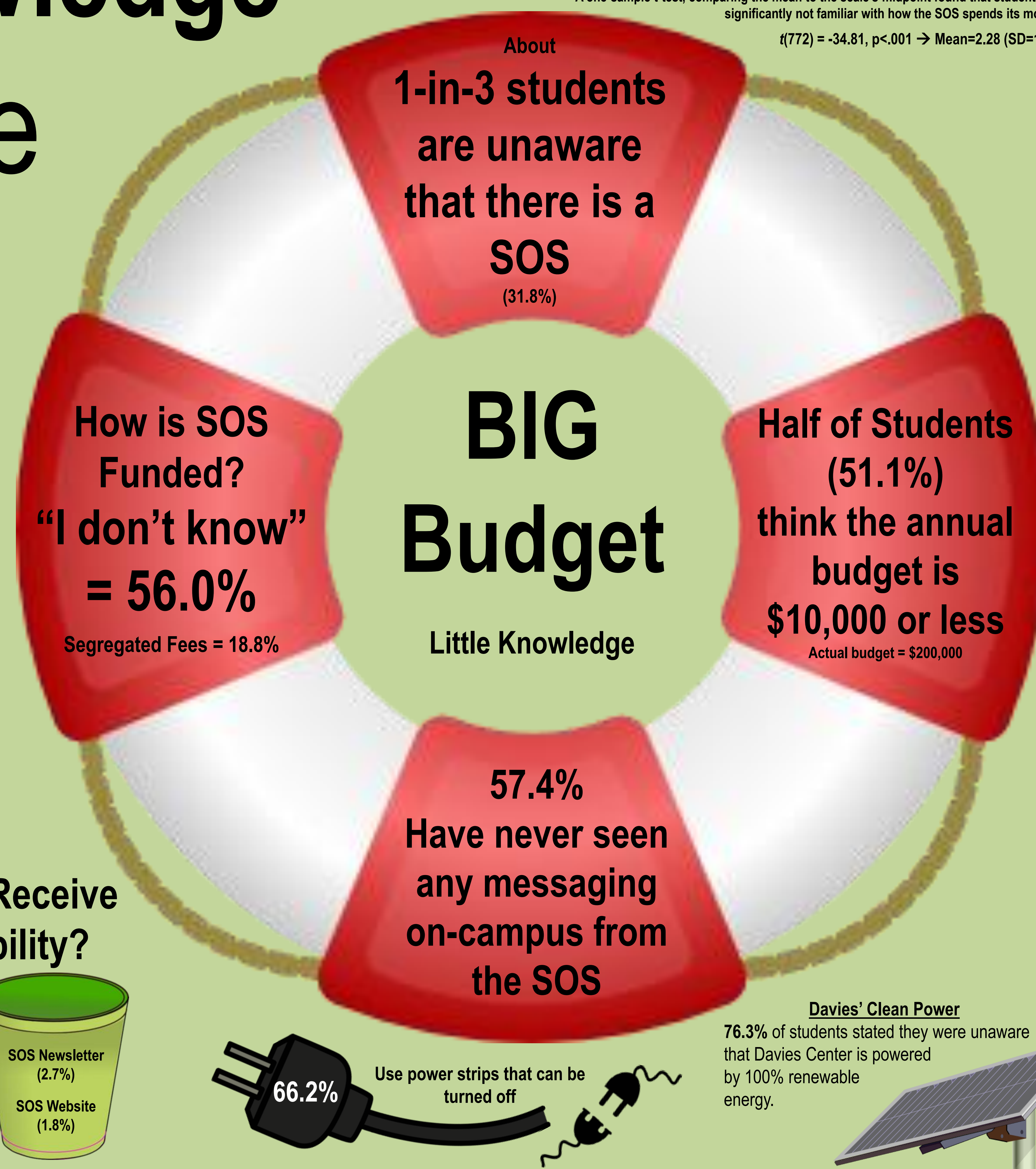
- Zimride = 55.6%
- E-Waste Recycling = 33.2%
- Free Water Bottle Distribution = 32.7%
- Campus Garden = 30.4%
- Compost pick-up = 22.7%
- Water Bottle Design Contest = 20.7%
- Blugold Bike Lease = 20.2%
- SOS Film Series = 14.9%
- SCORE Program = 9.8%
- Windsor Program = 8.5%
- Litter Cleanup Events = 18.9%

About 1-in-5 students (18.7%) said they had **never** heard of any of these

Average number that students knew = 2.68 out-of 11

Knowledge of the SOS

A one-item, 7-point Likert scale question asked students to rate their level of agreement (1=SD, 7=SA) to the statement... "I am familiar with how the SOS spends its \$200,000 budget." A one-sample t-test, comparing the mean to the scale's midpoint found that students are significantly not familiar with how the SOS spends its money. $t(772) = -34.81, p < .001 \rightarrow \text{Mean} = 2.28 (SD = 1.37)$



Methods

Survey Instrument

Students in CJ 374 (Integrated Strategic Communication Campaign Design and Evaluation) surveyed 779 students via an online survey about their knowledge regarding the Student Office of Sustainability and the sustainable behaviors they regularly perform. Questions also assessed students' information preferences.

Analysis

Data were compiled using SPSS.

Sustainable Behaviors Students Regularly Perform

Always Separate Trash from Recyclables **55.5%**

Use a reusable water bottle **90.3%**

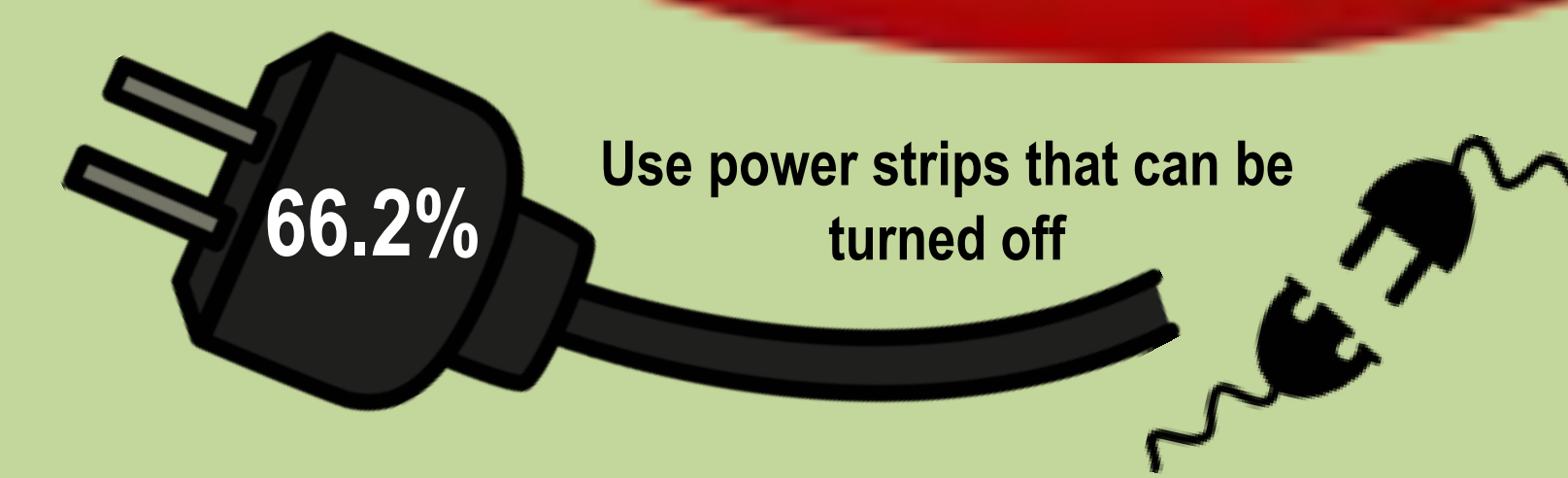
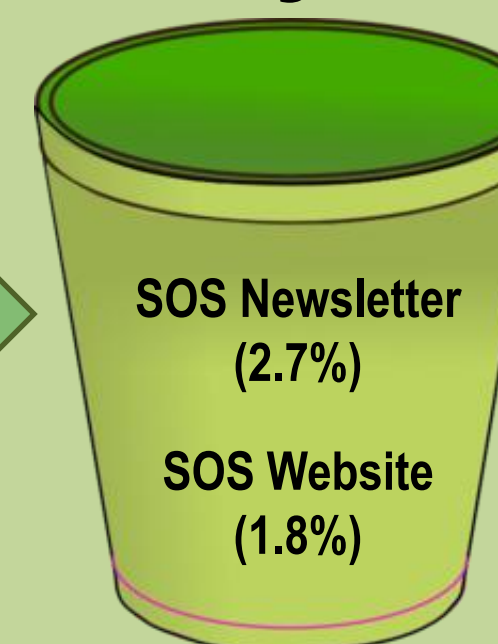
Turn lights off when leaving a room **87.3%**

Use reusable grocery bags **37.5%**

How Would Students Like to Receive Information about Sustainability?

- Posters = 37.5%
- Professors = 34.6%
- Facebook = 30.6%
- Friends = 28.5%
- Emails = 27.5%

Places students aren't going to for information



Key Recommendations

- For knowledge to be improved, communication efforts need to be focused in the channels/sources from which students would like to receive information
 - Monthly emails to the student body with a "sustainability tip" could be effective, as would targeting interpersonal influencers of students (i.e., professors and friends).
 - Creating a monthly newsletter, and updating a website, that nobody reads is not a good use of resources or time.
- Free water bottle giveaway needs to be discontinued
 - 9-in-10 students are already using a reusable water bottle, and only 19% said they have ever received at bottle from the SOS.
 - Stop providing a product that the majority of students have already adopted.
- Product giveaways/promotions should be centered on behaviors the majority of students don't already perform
 - Only 37.5% of students admit to using reusable grocery bags. Provide reusable bags to students, and start a grocery bag design contest to promote this giveaway.
 - Partner with local retailers to provide incentives for students to use reusable bags while shopping.
- If the SOS wants to be a responsible steward of students' funding, we recommend it be more deliberative, intentional, and transparent in how it spends its money



The Power of AND

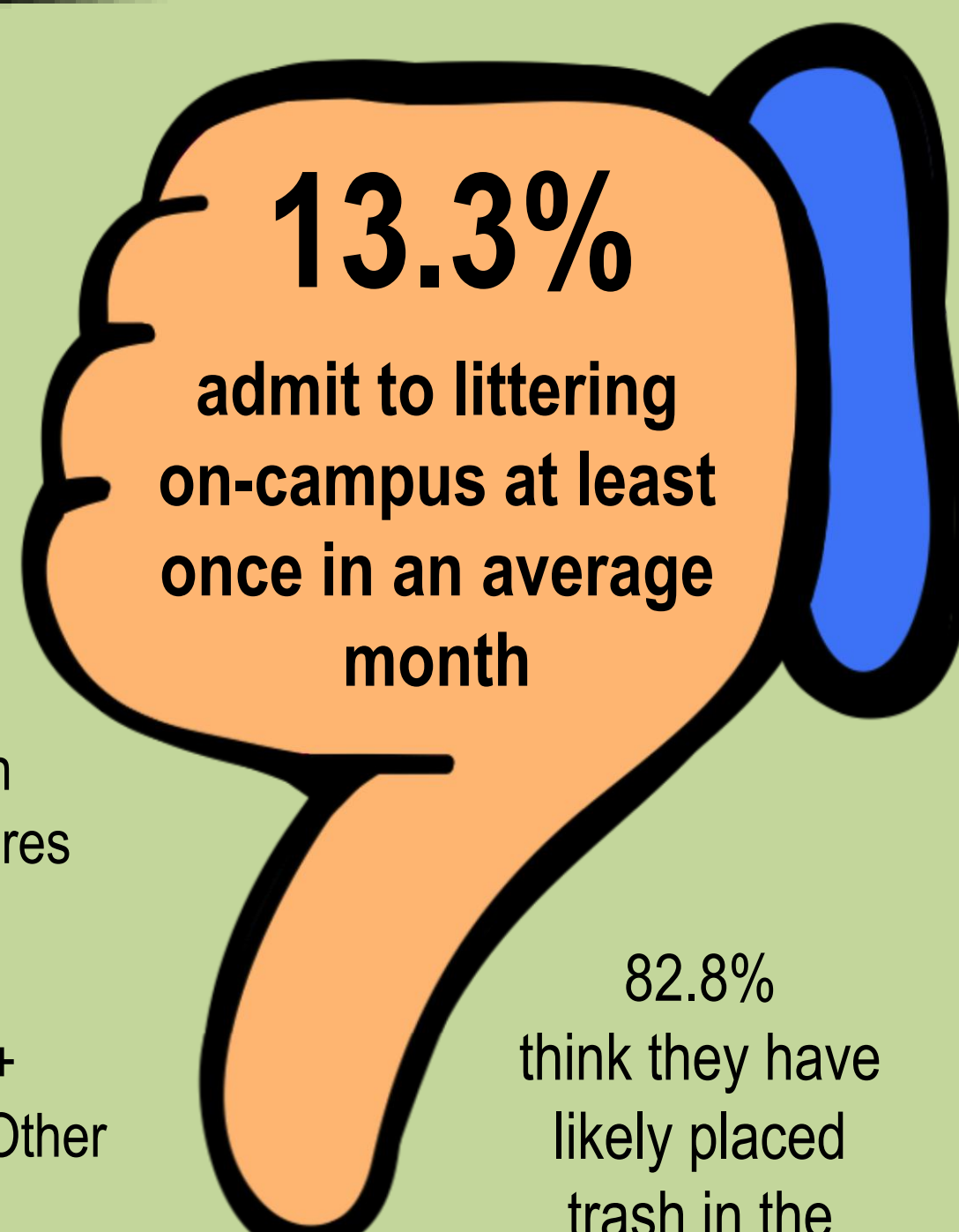
Our Sample (n=779) - 64.4% female - 34.3% male

How do they get around? (regularly used modes of transportation)

- Walking = 86.6%
- Personal Car = 53.9%
- Bicycle = 28.6%
- Bus = 28.2%
- Friend's Car = 24.3%
- Skateboard = 4.2%
- Motorized Scooter = 0.8%

Year in School:

- 24.0% Freshmen
- 24.1% Sophomores
- 18.6% Juniors
- 24.4% Seniors
- 7.4% Senior 5yr+
- 1.3% Graduate/Other



82.8% think they have likely placed trash in the wrong bin in Davies Center at one time

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